

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: RH, UK, PDEV

SUBJECT: RHODESIA: US COMMENTS ON PAPERS FOR GRAHAM-LOW TRIP

1. PLEASE PASS THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON THE BRITISH STEERING PAPER FOR THE LOW-GRAHAM TRIP TO THE FCO.UK EMB-SY TELLS US GRAHAMANXIOUS TO RECEIVE COMMENTS ASAP MONDAY A.M..

A. WE HAVE SOME DIFFICULTY WITH FULLY ENDORSING AT THIS TIME THE BASIC STRATEGY IMPLICIT IN THE STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVE AND MADE SPECIFIC IN THE PROPOSED LETTER TO THE SALISBURY GROUP, I.E. THAT WE WILL TRY TO BRING THE PARTIES TOGETHER FOR TALKS ON SPECIFIC MATTERS AT VARYING LEVELS IN ADVANCE OF A MEETING TO BE ATTENDED

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 127871

BY VANCE AND OWEN. THIS CONSTITUTES A MODIFICATION OF OUR EARLIER THINKING IN WHICH WE ENVISAGED THE TWO SECRETARIES OPENING AN ALL-PARTIES MEETING. IT SEEMS TO US THAT THIS IS A WORTHY POSSIBLE NEGOTIATING SCENARIO, BUT ONLY ONE OF SEVERAL WHICH MIGHT DEVELOP OUT OF THE INITIAL LOW-GRAHAM MEETINGS WITH THE PARTIES. WE SHOULD THEREFORE, NOT SINGLE IT OUT AT THIS POINT. THE PUBLIC

AND PRIVATELY STATED GOAL OF THE LOW-GRAHAM MISSION
MUST CONTINUE TO BE THE CONVOCATION OF AN ALL-PARTIES
OR ROUNDTABLE MEETING.

B. PARA 8 LAST SENTENCE: AS A MATTER OF POLICY AND
PRINCIPLE THE TRANSITIONAL PROCESS MUST INVOLVE A CLEAR
AND IRREVERSIBLE TRANSFER OF POWER FROM THE RHODESIA
FRONT AT ITS VERY OUTSET, NOT "AT SOME STAGE" AS STATED.

C. PARA 9: THE LAST SENTENCE POINTS OUT THAT A SUGGESTION
THAT INDEPENDENCE BE GRANTED IN ADVANCE OF ELECTIONS,
THOUGH THEORETICALLY POSSIBLE, WOULD RAISE SEVERE
POLITICAL PROBLEMS. WE ENDORSE THIS VIEW AND FOR THAT
REASON MUST CATEGORICALLY STATE THAT IN NO CONVERSATION
SHOULD GRAHAM AND LOW EVEN RAISE THIS AS A REMOTE
POSSIBILITY.

D. PARA 12B AS IN THE PAST, WE SHOULD AVOID REFERENCE
TO A CEASEFIRE AS OUR PRINCIPAL GOAL; THIS ONLY SERVES
TO RAISE AFRICAN SUSPICIONS. 12B FIRST SENTENCE SHOULD
READ, THEREFORE, "TO TRY AND ESTABLISH THE FORMAT AND
PLACE FOR DISCUSSIONS ABOUT MILITARY MATTERS."

E. PARA 10 - WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT WE MUST ACCEPT
NKOMO'S CHARACTERIZATION OF GRAHAM AND LOW AS ENVOYS, BY
WHICH HE CLEARLY MEANS MESSENGERS WITHOUT NEGOTIATING
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 STATE 127871

AUTHORITY. WE ARE CONCERNED THAT DR. OWEN MIGHT HAVE
INADVERTENTLY ADOPTED THIS SAME VIEW AS HE NOTED IN HIS
LETTER TO THE SECRETARY ON POLICE MATTERS THAT GRAHAM-
LOW SHOULD NOT BRING FORTH ANY NEW IDEAS AT THIS TIME.

F. WE VIEW IT AS ESSENTIAL TO THE SUCCESS OF THE
MISSION THAT GRAHAM-LOW HAVE LATITUDE TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE
NEW FORMULATIONS GIVEN THAT THEY 1) OPERATE WITHIN THE
BOUNDS OF THE PRINCIPLES OF THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS
AND B) THEY MAKE IT CLEAR TO ALL PARTIES THAT THEIR
DISCUSSIONS ARE, IN EFFECT, AD REFERENDUM, WITH DECISION
TO BE REACHED IN DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS AMONGST THE PARTIES
AT AN ALL-PARTIES MEETING. ACCORDINGLY, WE WOULD NOTE IN

RELATION TO PARA 14 THAT WHILE IT IS IMPORTANT TO DISCUSS
WITH THE SALISBURY PARTIES THOSE TOPICS THAT THEY ARE
MOST WILLING, OR LESS UNWILLING, TO DEAL WITH, WE SHOULD
MAKE IT CLEAR THAT WE ARE OPEN TO DISCUSSION OF ALL RELEVANT
TOPICS WITH ALL OF THE PARTIES. ONE WAY WE MIGHT
ENCOURAGE THE SALISBURY GROUP TO ENGAGE IN BROADER
DISCUSSIONS IS BY FREELY DISCUSSING WITH THEM THE SUBSTANCE
OF OUR CONVERSATIONS WITH THE PATRIOTIC FRONT, AND

VICE VERSA.

G. WE DO NOT OBJECT TO EXPLORING WITH THE PARTIES THE IDEA OF A NEUTRAL CHAIRMAN IN PLACE OF A RESIDENT COMMISSIONER (PARA 15). HOWEVER, IN DISCUSSIONS OF THIS TOPIC, AS WELL AS OF OTHER HIGHLY VISIBLE ELEMENTS OF THE AAP, IT IS DECIDEDLY PREFERABLE TO LEAD THE OTHER PARTIES TO RAISE THE POSSIBLE MODIFICATION. IF WE DO SO, WE OPEN OURSELVES TO THE CHARGE OF ABANDONING OUR OWN PROPOSALS.

H. PARA 15: DISCUSSION OF THE NUMERICAL COMPOSITION OF A COUNCIL SHOULD BE POSTPONED, LEAVING THE QUESTION OF NUMBERS TO BE WORKED OUT BY THE PARTIES THEMSELVES

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 STATE 127871

AT AN ALL-PARTIES MEETING. HOWEVER, WE SHOULD HOLD TO POSITION THAT NO PARTY SHOULD DOMINATE TRANSITIONAL PROCESS.

I. PARA 17 - WE FAIL TO SEE THE CONNECTION BETWEEN PRIOR AGREEMENT ON LAWS RELATING TO DISCRIMINATION AND LAND TENURE AND THE PF'S WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT LESSTHAN PARITY ON A GOVERNING COUNCIL. WE DO NOT THINK THE PF WILL SEE ANY CONNECTION EITHER.

J. PARA 21 - WE HAVE NO OBJECTION TO UK APPROACHING RHODESIAN REGIME FOR PERMISSION TO SET UP A CYPHER FACILITY. AT THE SAME TIME UK SHOULD ALSO INFORM REGIME THAT WE ARE WILLING TO HAVE US DEFENSE ATTACHES PLANE BASED IN PRETORIA USED OCCASIONALLY TO TRANSPORT LOW AND GRAHAM TO AND FROM RHODESIA AND TO GET THE REGIME'S CLEARANCE IN PRINCIPLE FOR THIS.

K. WE ENDORSE THE IDEA THAT STEEL AND COL. REILLY SHOULD BE AVAILABLE FOR SPECIALIZED DISCUSSIONS.

L. IN THE COMING DAYS WE WILL CONTINUE TO THINK ABOUT TACTICS OF NEGOTIATIONS AND PERHAPS BE IN THE POSITION TO OFFER OTHER IDEAS, PARTICULARLY RELATING TO HOW WE SHOULD ATTEMPT TO NARROW THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE SIDES.

2. WE ASSUME THAT THE QUESTION OF TIMING OF THE VISIT AND OF THE POSSIBILITY OF GRAHAM'S PRECEDING LOW TO SALISBURY HAS NOW BEEN RESOLVED. IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT THE TWO WILL MEET IN LUSAKA ON MAY 29 AND BEGIN TRAVEL TO SALISBURY THE NEXT DAY VIA JOHANNESBURG.

3. IN RELATION TO THE LETTER WHICH FCO HAS PROPOSED BE SENT TO THE SALISBURY GROUP ANNOUNCING THE GRAHAM-LOW,
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CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 05 STATE 127871

TRIP WE WOULD PREFER TO MODIFY IT IN CONFORMITY WITH OUR CONCERN AS EXPRESSED IN 1AABOVE. THEREFORE, WE WOULD SUGGEST ELIMINATING ALL OF PARAGRAPH ONE AFTER THE SECOND SENTENCE, AND PROCEEDING DIRECTLY TO THE SECOND PARAGRAPH. IN MAKING THIS SUGGESTION WE WANT TO REITERATE THAT WE ARE NOT NECESSARILY OPPOSED TO THE CONCEPT EXPRESSED IN THE THIRD AND FOURTH SENTENCES OF PARA 1, BUT BELIEVE THAT BY STATING IT SO CLEARLY AT THE OUTSET OF THE MISSION WE MIGHT ROB OURSELVES OF TACTICAL FLEXIBILITY.

4. WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT A SIMILAR LETTER STATING IN SIMPLE TERMS THE PURPOSES OF THE GRAHAM-LAW MISSION, AND NOTING THAT THE TEAM COMES WITH THE FULL CONFIDENCE OF OUR RESPECTIVE GOVERNMENTS, SHOULD BE SENT TO MUGABE AND NKOMO AS WELL AS A MATTER OF FORM. WE WOULD WELCOME

RECEIVING A BRITISH DRAFT FOR SUCH MESSAGES.

5. WE AGREE THAT WE SHOULD FINESSE THE QUESTION OF THE "BASE" OF THE MISSION. HOWEVER, SOME PUBLICITY GIVEN TO THE TRAVEL AND MEETINGS OF THE TEAM WOULD BE BENEFICIAL IN CREATING THE IMPRESSION THAT "SOMETHING IS BEING DONE". ACCORDINGLY, WE SUGGEST ISSUING A JOINT ANNOUNCEMENT CONCERNING THE TEAM'S ENDEAVORS TO COINCIDE WITH MR. GRAHAM'S ARRIVAL IN LUSAKA AS WELL AS A JOINT MESSAGE TO THE FRONT LINE, NIGERIA AND OTHERS NEXT WEEK SIMPLY SETTING FORTH THE PURPOSE OF THE MISSION. WE SHALL PROVIDE DRAFT LANGUAGE FOR THESE MESSAGES EARLY NEXT WEEK. VANCE

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